

Endocrine Issue

American Chemistry Council alert regarding governmental action on endocrine disrupting chemicals in Europe.

To: Public Health Team
Endocrine Issues Policy Subteam
Government Relations Subteam
Communications Subteam
From: Katy Kunzer

You should be aware of some developments in the European Union over the last couple of weeks relating to the endocrine issue. Many of you already are aware of the first item, the release of the report prioritizing substances for further evaluation as to their role in endocrine disruption. The second item relates to action by the Parliamentary Environmental Committee on the EU Commission Endocrine Strategy. That Committee is calling for quick action on suspected endocrine disruptors based on the precautionary principle.

Draft of Consultant Report with A List of 60 Priority Chemicals for Further Evaluation

The draft report from the contractors (BKH Consulting Engineers) prioritizing substances for further evaluation of their role in endocrine disruption was made available to the Competent Authorities For Implementation Of the New Substances Directive (67/548/EEC) and the Existing Substances Regulation ((EEC)793/93), who will be meeting this week. The priority list contains approximately 60 substances from 29 different categories of chemicals.

Availability of the Report. We have received a copy of the Executive Summary and will receive the full 500+ pager report in the next few days. The Executive Summary was available only for official distribution and had been closely held. However, the list of 60 chemicals was published in the Endocrine/Estrogen Letter. Now the full BKH report will be available to anyone who wants to receive a copy. We will be able to send it electronically. Contact me (703-741-5177 ; kathleen_kunzer@americanchemistry.com) or Christel Richardson (703-741-5203; christel_richardson@americanchemistry.com) if you are interested in receiving it.

What the list means. It is not a list of substances determined to be endocrine disruptors. Rather, it only identifies substances needing further study. Moreover, it is only a contractor's report and only a draft. It has not been officially endorsed by any body. The list was created from a review of over 560 chemicals through a series of criteria. The priority list for further evaluation included those substances that the contractor found: 1) to be high production volume and highly persistent; 2) having at least one study providing some evidence of endocrine disruption in an intact organism (not applying a weight of evidence test); and 3) having high human or wildlife exposure concern.

Next Steps. We have prepared some background and messages which we have made available to CHEMSTAR people and other groups or members whose

made available to CHEMSTAR panels and other groups or members whose chemicals were on the list. The draft report itself has been referred to the technical committees -- a working group on Pesticides Legislation and a Scientific Committee for Toxicity, Ecotoxicity and the Environment -- for their review. The Competent Authorities will submit comments to the European Commission on the document by September. The Commission will then conduct a stakeholder consultation meeting probably sometime in November.

European Parliament Resolution on the Commission Strategy for Endocrine Disruptors.

The Commission Communication on Strategy for Endocrine Disruptors was forwarded to two Parliament Committees -- the Environment Committee as the lead responsible committee and the Industry Committee for its opinion. The Industry Committee reported earlier to the Parliament, supporting further research and testing fairly consistent with industry's position. The Environment Committee circulated its draft resolution last week. It takes a much more aggressive stance. In brief, the resolution calls for: 1) a screening and testing program and further research; 2) creating a list of suspected endocrine disruptors by the end of 2000 that includes at least the 560 chemicals; and 3) acting to ban, phase out or limit the use of substances based on the precautionary principle by mid-2001. It further calls for a new chemical regulatory framework based on the precautionary principle, requiring proof for new and existing chemicals that there is a "reasonable certainty of no harm" before a chemical can be used.

Potential Consequences. Even if approved by the full Parliament, the resolution is not legally binding. It is only a recommendation to the Commission. However, unlike the Commission, the Parliament is a popularly elected body that is of increasing influence and importance. Their passage of such a resolution would create further political and public pressure on the Commission and the individual states to take action now on some of the substances.

Next steps. The committee will vote on the resolution during its meeting July 10-12. CEFIC was unsuccessful in getting amendments introduced for the committee's consideration during that meeting. This means that the resolution will likely be approved and forwarded to the full Parliament for their vote when they return in early September. To get amendments even considered at that level will require support from 50 members of Parliament -- a difficult task, particularly since they will all be on vacation throughout August. We will work with CEFIC to support their efforts in Europe. At a minimum, there will be a clear need for companies with facilities or home offices in Europe to help educate the members of Parliament from those countries on this issue.

For additional information, you can contact me at 703-741-5177 or by e-mail at kathleen_kunzer@americanchemistry.com.

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